

Victoria Naturally ebulletin No 9 – December 20, 2007

Welcome to Victoria Naturally's ninth ebulletin. If you would like to receive this ebulletin as a text-only document, please reply with the words "text only" in the subject line.

>>GOOD CHEER

Merry Christmas!

We'd like to wish you all a safe and merry Christmas and a happy New Year and thank you for being part of our efforts to raise awareness of the need for action to protect Victoria's magnificent natural environment.

It's been an exciting year for the Victoria Naturally alliance with the launch in April of the State Government's Land and Biodiversity White Paper inquiry and the more than 350 submissions that flooded in from across Victoria.

Early analysis of the submissions, which came from many sources including individuals, local environment groups, local councils and catchment management authorities, reveals a huge groundswell of support for turning around Victoria's biodiversity crisis.

It's also been exciting to see the list of subscribers to our biodiversity ebulletin grow from just over a hundred when it started to nearly 800 now. Such interest in the health of Victoria's biodiversity is a source of inspiration.

Last submission for the year ... phew

The Department of Environment and Sustainability plans to put in 232km of firebreaks through the heart of the Yarra Ranges National Park next year. The new firebreaks would be in addition to the 250km cleared last year.

The Victorian National Parks Association says the firebreaks will have significant impacts on habitat for a long list of threatened species including Leadbeaters Possum, the Smoky Mouse, Baw Baw Frog and the Spotted-Tree Frog. The firebreaks will also mean the loss of 8592 large trees.

You can give these threatened species an early Christmas present by sending a quick submission to the EPBC unit or by writing a letter to the Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett.

Take action

For a sample letter and to find out more visit the [VNPA website](#).

>>WHAT'S ON OVER THE CHRISSIE HOLIDAYS?

East Gippsland Forest Camp

Plans are afoot for an East Gippsland forest camp beginning just after Christmas.

The aim of the camp is to familiarise people with the beauty and grandeur of the forests of East Gippsland and gain support in efforts to protect what botanist David Bellamy described as "the best temperate forests in the world".

Organisers will be conducting forest tours (by car), as well as a range of walks from short, easy strolls to longer bushwalks as well as off-track adventures.

When: Any time from December 28 to January 20.

Where: Goongerah Camping Ground, (1½ hrs north of Orbost). This is a picturesque spot next to the Brodribb River.

Contact: John Renowden on 03 9380 5759 or email renowden@optusnet.com.au. You can also contact Susan Cleary on clesl@tpg.com.au.

You can also download the [full invitation \(48kb pdf\)](#) from the [VNPA website](#).

>>HERE'S TO A YEAR OF HOPE

Plenty of work ahead

We plan to launch a Victoria Naturally alliance website early next year. The site will give us greater scope for exploring biodiversity issues in Victoria, keeping you up-to-date and providing tools to help Victorians get active for nature.

We will also have an exhibit at next year's Sustainable Living Festival as well as sponsoring a forum called Reconnecting Nature. Speakers will include Dr Sarah Bekessy from RMIT University and Greening Australia's Ron Dodds, who will talk about Habitat 141, an exciting landscape restoration project in western Victoria.

We are also expecting the release of the second stage of the State Government's Land and Biodiversity White Paper inquiry, a "Green Paper" that will be open to public comment in late March/early April. This will be an important stage in the State Government's land and biodiversity inquiry and it will be critical we get as many as submissions as possible.

As talks in Bali last week show the world is at a critical juncture in history. Never before have the decisions and actions of a generation been so important to the ongoing health and survival of the planet we live on.

There is a growing vision in Victoria of “landscape restoration”, a vision that gives us a positive way forward. It’s a vision that sees us reversing the 150 year history of land clearance, a vision that sees Victoria’s catchments, coasts and marine waters with flourishing biodiversity and healthy ecosystems that are highly valued, securely protected, sustainably managed and effectively restored by community and government.

So from the team at Victoria Naturally, have a safe holiday period and we’ll see you in the New Year!

>>WHO WE ARE

Victoria Naturally is an alliance of environment groups that want to see concerted action taken to protect the state’s biodiversity from a range of threats including climate change, habitat fragmentation and species extinction.

Led by the Victorian National Parks Association, the alliance includes the Australian Conservation Foundation, Environment Victoria, Greening Australia (Vic), The Wilderness Society, Trust for Nature, Bush Heritage Australia and the Invasive Species Council.

We are working to build community support and awareness of the threats facing Victoria’s native plants and wildlife, especially in light of the increased pressures climate change is putting on our natural world.

A major part of our work will be to ensure that the State Government’s Land and Biodiversity White Paper provides the direction Victoria needs to become a world leader in environmental protection and restoration in the face of global climate change.

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>>THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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